(b) whether it is also a fact that the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Department of Drugs and many State Governments have raided illegal drug manufacturing factories and supply networks over the years and exposed the racket and have taken legal action against the firms and people involved in it; and

(c) if so, the details thereof for the period from 2000 to 2005 alongwith the action taken in this regard, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) Manufacture and sale of spurious/counterfeit drugs is a clandestine activity. The States/UTs Drugs Control Organisations, based on investigations and specific information, carry out raids to unearth such illegal activity.

(b) CBI and the Drugs Control Departments do carryout raids whenever information is available from different sources regarding illegal drug manufacturing and supply activities and actions have been taken against persons found indulging in such illegal activity.

(c) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table.

Breakthrough in TB treatment

2504. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Delhi's National Institute of Immunology has identified five key genes that represent a breakthrough in treatment of TB;

(b) whether this would help to evolve better drugs for cure of TB; and

(c) what steps have been and are being taken to develop such effective drugs and the progress made in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) It has been reported that Scientists at National Institute of Immunology have identified five genes that enable Mycobacterium tuberculosis, the TB causing bacterium of acquire the iron that it needs to sustain growth and promote infection.

(b) Targeting genes within this cluster may represent a good strategy for eventual development of potential candidate drugs against tuberculosis and other mycobacterial infections.

(c) Mycobacteria have evolved siderophores with lipid chain tails that enable them to exploit the macrophage's lipid-trafficking system to capture iron more efficiently. Now that these major siderophore genes have been defined as mentioned above, understanding the biosynthetic pathway that they are responsible for is the next step necessary in order to move eventually to the stage of developing small-molecule inhibitors with the potential to emerge as novel anti-tuberculosis drugs.

Recruitment age of nurses

2505. SHRIMATI S G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the age limit for recruitment of nurses/ sisters/male nurses in all the Central Government hospitals in the country is 35 years;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi recently brought out an advertisement for recruitment of above mentioned staff and the age limit prescribed was 30 years; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) to (c) According to the guidelines of Department of Personnel and Training the upper age limit for direct recruitment to the posts carrying the scale of pay of Rs. 5000-8000/- is 25 years. However, in the case of Central Government Hospitals and All India Institute of Medical Sciences the prescribed upper age limit for the post of Staff Nurses/Male Nurses is 35 years and 30 years respectively.

Smack addicts in India

2506. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that smack, a retail business out of opium, addicts are growing leaps and bounds in Punjab, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan and 3/4th of opium in India is available in some parts of Madhya Pradesh;